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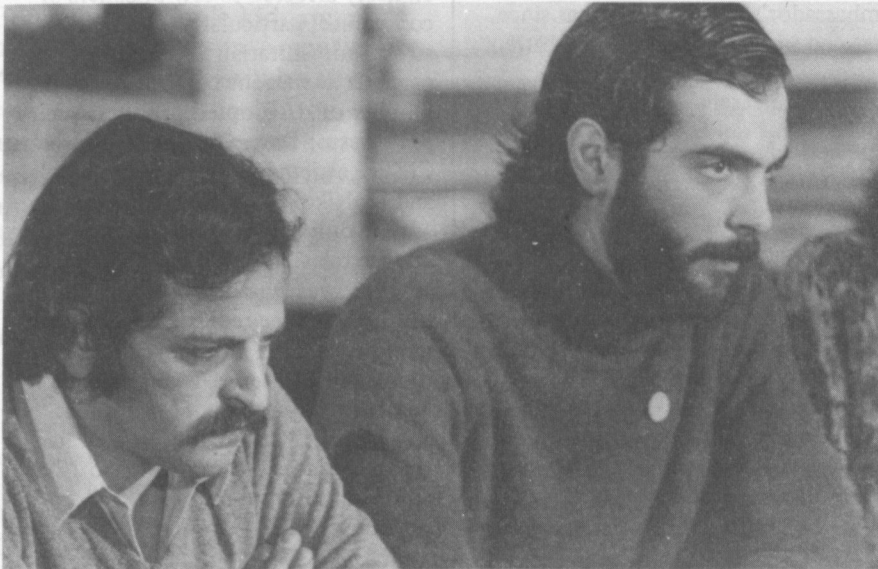
international newsletter

MARCH 1980 Volume X Number 3

Survivors tell of terror in Argentinian camps

Two survivors who escaped from secret detention camps in Argentina have described a pattern of systematic torture and brutality culminating, they believe, in death for most of the people they met in the camps.

Their unique eyewitness report was published by *AI* on 4 February and presented to a news conference in London the same day by the two men, Oscar Alfredo GONZALEZ and Horacio CID DE LA PAZ. They spent 15 months in the camps after being abducted within two weeks of each other in November 1977 in Buenos Aires. They were in five camps between them and their account provides details on hundreds of prisoners—most of them now believed to be dead.



Oscar Alfredo González (left) and Horacio Cid de la Paz who survived torture at the hands of Argentinian security forces. Copyright: Raoul Shade

The report throws new light on the possible fate of thousands of Argentine citizens who have “disappeared” over the past three years. Local human rights groups say the disappearances total more than 15,000.

AI decided to publish the testimony of the two men after months of checking their account against its own records of people who have “disappeared” and the statements of former prisoners. The organization also consulted well-informed sources in Argentina and was able to corroborate many of the details given by the two men.

They came to *AI* with their testimony after the organization issued a list in 1979 of 2,665 people known to have “disappeared” since the coup that brought General Jorge VIDELA to power in March 1976.

They testify to a consistent pattern supervised in meticulous detail by military and police officers. Torture and interrogation were followed by a period of what they call “concentration camp” life with regular punishments and beatings, and finally, for most prisoners, “transfer”—the euphemism for death. Most of the victims had been taken from their homes or places of work without any semblance of legality by armed agents of the security forces.

González, a 27-year-old factory worker when he was kidnapped, had been active politically in a union. His wife, who he says had not taken part in politics, was abducted a month later. He has heard nothing of her since January 1978. De la Paz, who was 20 when he was kidnapped, was a student leader and a member of the

Sakharov exiled in crackdown

Soviet scientist and human rights activist Andrei SAKHAROV is among more than 50 Soviet dissenters who are known to have been arrested or sentenced to imprisonment during the four months after *AI* issued its open letter to Soviet President Leonid BREZHNEV.

Dr Sakharov was taken into custody in Moscow and sent to live in the city of Gorky on 22 January. On the same day, *AI* said in a letter delivered to the Soviet Embassy in London that it was shocked by the news. The letter said all the known facts indicated that the action was taken because of Dr Sakharov’s public activities in defence of human rights and that it contravened international human rights instruments subscribed to by the USSR.

Dr Sakharov was also stripped of decorations and awards previously conferred on him by the Soviet Government.

Dr Sakharov was not charged with any criminal offence or brought before a court.

The action against him came during a major crackdown on dissenters in the USSR to which *AI* had called attention on 15 January (February *Newsletter*). As the crackdown continued *AI* compiled a list of 51 people known to have been arrested, sentenced or confined to psychiatric institutions in the period from 1 October 1979 to 24 January 1980 for the non-violent exercise of human rights □

Montonero wing of the Peronist movement.

They estimate that 800 people passed through the camps they were in during their 15 months in captivity, and they provide details on more than 300 of them.

Both men were taken first to *Club Atlético*, a building in Buenos Aires which served as an initial depot for prisoners, where they saw their first
continued on back page

Guatemala

Peasants slain in embassy attack

New information has come to light on the Guatemala City bloodbath in which at least 39 people, including peasants, Spanish diplomatic staff and former Guatemalan government officials, died when police attacked the Spanish Embassy on 31 January.

The peasants were from among some 400 Indian men, women and children who had come to the capital from Quiché Province to complain of the "disappearance" of nine of their leaders arrested by the army in September 1979. The Indians had been in Guatemala City for three weeks asking in vain for a meeting with government authorities. They also wanted the withdrawal from Quiché of military units said to be responsible for abduction, torture and murder in the course of disputes over land tenure in the oil-rich region.

First press reports said that police attacked the embassy after the peasants occupied it, and that most of the deaths were caused by a fire started by a petrol bomb thrown by an Indian. The Indians had in fact gone to seek the mediation of Ambassador Maximiliano CAJAL Y LOPEZ and, he has since said, were prepared to leave peacefully. The Ambassador has also said that many of the dead were killed by gunfire as police burst through a door on the second floor, where Indians, embassy staff and visitors had taken refuge.

The Ambassador has confirmed that the ensuing fire was started by an

Indian who threw a home-made petrol bomb as police attacked. Ambassador Cajal y López said that he was briefly held by police who openly discussed whether to kill him.

One Indian, Gregorio YUJA XONA, survived the incident with minor injuries. He was taken to hospital at the insistence of the Ambassador, but was abducted from his bed by about 15 assailants. His corpse was later thrown from a car in front of San Carlos University, with a placard saying: "Traitor brought to justice. The Spanish Ambassador runs the same risk".

The Guatemalan Government has blamed the killings on "terrorists". As the only witness able to challenge the government account, Ambassador Cajal y López took refuge in the US Ambassador's residence and has since returned to Spain. Guatemalan authorities now concede that the Ambassador invited the peasant delegation into the embassy, but say the peasants were guerrillas and that the Ambassador had previously "collaborated with the guerrillas". Spanish authorities deny this.

On 24 January, a week before the embassy incident, lawyer Abraham Ruben ISCAMPARI was found murdered after being seized by plain-clothes police as he left a meeting with some of the Indians. Señor Iscampari was a leader of the political party *Frente Unido de la Revolución* (United Revolutionary Front) □

Republic of Korea

Military court convicts activists

The Martial Law Court in Seoul sentenced 18 people to between one and four years' imprisonment on 25 January. The 18 are among 123 people arrested in November 1979 for holding an unauthorized political meeting (January and February *Newsletters*).

Former president YUN Po-sun, 82, was given a two-year suspended sentence, and Quaker leader HAM Sok-hon, 78, was given a one-year suspended sentence. YANG Sun-jik, a former member of the National Assembly, and KIM Byong-gol, a member of the Free Writers Association, were sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

Further trials are expected. Charges

have been brought against nine of 62 people arrested for attempting to attend the 10th Anniversary Lecture Meeting of the Korea Student Christian Federation in Seoul. Another nine are believed to have been charged in connection with an incident at Kwangju YWCA.

Following the abolition of Emergency Regulation No 9 on 7 December 1979, 68 political prisoners were released. Another nine were freed on 23 December under an amnesty to mark the inauguration of President CHOI Kyu-hah. However the government announced in December that no prisoners held under the Anti-Communist Law would be released □

Yugoslavia

Few amnestied

An amnesty declared to mark the anniversary on 29 November 1979 of the founding of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia affected only three prisoners who had been adopted by *AI* or were being investigated as possible prisoners of conscience. The number of prisoners amnestied on the anniversary has dropped sharply each year since 1977. In that year a total of 574 prisoners were affected, including 33 whose cases had been taken up by *AI*. In 1978, 94 prisoners benefited, 18 of them *AI* cases, while in 1979 the figures were 51 and three. Yet the number of prisoners adopted or investigated by *AI* in Yugoslavia has not declined significantly in the same period.

AI is concerned that the 1979 amnesty affected so few prisoners of conscience, particularly as there were strong humanitarian and health grounds to warrant pardons for a number of *AI*-adopted prisoners such as Professor Davor ARAS, Vjenceslav CIZEK, Adem DEMACI, Manda PARIC and Dr Nikola NOVAKOVIC.

The only adopted prisoner of conscience released under the 1979 amnesty was Dusan BRKIC, who had had his sentence reduced by a previous amnesty and had not more than six months left to serve. Two prisoners being investigated by *AI* benefited: Josip BILUSIC and Ante BURIC had their sentences cut from 14½ to 12½ and from seven to six years respectively □

Cameroun

Human rights appeal

AI has urged the national congress of the ruling party of the Cameroun, *L'Union nationale camerounaise*, to take steps to end the detention without trial of hundreds of political prisoners held in "administrative internment" camps that operate under the direct control of the President. There is no medical care in the camps; food rations are low; prisoners are often isolated and torture is used. At least 50 of the detainees have been held since July 1976 □

Prisoner Releases and Cases

The International Secretariat learned in January of the release of 95 prisoners under adoption or investigation and took up 213 new cases.

Campaign for Prisoners of the Month



Each of the people whose story is told below is a prisoner of conscience. Each has been arrested because of his or her religious or political beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin or language. None has used or advocated violence. Their continuing detention is a violation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. International appeals can help to secure the release of these prisoners or to improve their detention conditions. In the interest of the prisoners, letters to the authorities should be worded carefully and courteously. You should stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. In *no* circumstances should communications be sent to the prisoner.

Ismael WEINBERGER Weisz, *Uruguay*

A 51-year-old journalist is serving an eight-year prison sentence handed down by a Uruguayan military court in August 1979, more than three years after his arrest.

Ismael WEINBERGER was convicted of "attacking the constitution", although his newspaper had advocated respect for the constitution, and of "subversive association", on the grounds of his membership of the Uruguayan Communist Party. The party has a long parliamentary tradition and was legal until 1973, when the armed forces seized power in Uruguay.

Mr Weinberger was arrested at his home in February 1976 and held incommunicado for 10 months. When his family were permitted to see him he showed signs of severe torture: a stiff arm, serious leg wounds, weight loss of 25 kilos, and the effects of hallucinogenic drugs.

Ismael Weinberger was on the staff of the newspaper *El Popular* for 17 years, mainly as a writer on trade union affairs, and was a leader of the Association of Uruguayan Press (APU). He was visited in prison in 1979 by representatives of the Austrian and Israeli embassies, and by the Grand Rabbi of Uruguay. He has expressed a wish to emigrate to Israel.

Mr Weinberger is detained at Penal de Libertad Prison in San José, Uruguay, where conditions are known to have deteriorated significantly in recent months (February *Newsletter*). Conditions are marked by inadequate food and medical care; increasing torture and threats have been reported.

Please write courteously worded letters appealing for the immediate release of Ismael Weinberger Weisz to: Exmo. Sr. Presidente de la República Dr Aparicio Méndez, Casa de Gobierno, Montevideo, Uruguay; *and to:* Sr. Presidente del Supremo Tribunal Militar Cnel. Dr Federico Silva Ledesma, Canelones 2331, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Gheorghe BRASOVEANU, *Romania*

A 60-year-old economist was confined to a psychiatric hospital in Romania in March 1979 after helping to found an unofficial trade union. It was the fifth time that Gheorghe BRASOVEANU was put in a psychiatric hospital. The first four confinements, for periods up to several months, were imposed after he criticized relations between the Church and State in Romania.

Mr Brasoveanu's wife is reported to have been brought to State Security Headquarters in Bucharest on 7 March 1979 after a foreign radio station broadcast the founding declaration of the Free Trade Union of Romanian Workers, initiated by Mr Brasoveanu with some 20 intellectuals and workers.

Mr Brasoveanu's wife is said to have been persuaded to sign a statement that her husband was insane on the understanding that he would be confined briefly to a psychiatric hospital rather than be sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

On 10 March 1979 Mr Brasoveanu was arrested and confined to the Batistei Polyclinic in Bucharest as "dangerously insane". He is said to have been taken later to the psychiatric section of Jilava Prison Hospital, where a number of political dissenters have been held in recent years. It is not known whether he has since been brought to trial or is still confined to a psychiatric hospital, nor is his present place of detention known to *AI*. The authorities are not believed to have informed his family of any of these facts.

AI believes there are no grounds for considering Gheorghe Brasoveanu to be "dangerously insane".

Please write courteously worded letters requesting the immediate release of Gheorghe Brasoveanu to: Mr Grigoras Justin, Minister of Justice, Bulevard Gheorghe-Dej 33, 7000 Bucuresti, SR Romania.

Saudi DARAJ, *Sudan*

A trade union leader and former member of the Central Committee of the Sudanese Communist Party has been imprisoned without trial for most of the past nine years. After being freed in early 1978 under President Numeiri's "national reconciliation" policy, Saudi DARAJ was one of several hundred leftist opponents of President Jaafar Numeiri detained in August 1979 after strikes and demonstrations against the government's political and economic policies. They are held under the State Security Law, which provides for detention without charge or trial for six months, renewable indefinitely on the President's order.

Mr Daraj, 45, was a trade union official in the Government Stores Department where he worked, and was elected to the executive committee of the Sudanese General Federation of Workers. He also founded a band which played popular Sudanese music. From 1967 to 1969 he was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party which was banned with all other political parties when the military took power in 1969.

Saudi Daraj is held at Kober Prison in the capital, Khartoum, with more than 100 other political detainees. Conditions in the prison are believed to be unsatisfactory. Family visits are restricted, correspondence is denied, and shortcomings are alleged in medical treatment, although some seriously ill prisoners have been released on medical grounds. These include a former *AI* Prisoner of the Month, Gasim Amin. On 28 November detainees went on hunger strike, but ended it three days later after negotiations with the government.

The Sudan Bar Association has called on the government to end detention without trial.

Please send courteously worded letters appealing for the immediate release of Saudi Daraj to: Field Marshal Jaafar Mohammed Numeiri, President of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, Presidential Palace, Khartoum, Sudan.

By its very nature, *AI* offers a second line of defence against human rights violations. The front line of defence is inside every country where watchdogs are needed to prevent the erosion of civil liberties and to oppose political imprisonment, torture and killings.

But when domestic protest itself becomes a high risk, cooperative action on a regional basis and support by international human rights bodies can prove vital. To bring human rights activists on the front line together to exchange experiences and to encourage development of regional strategies for the protection of human rights, *AI* convened an Asian regional conference in Japan in 1976. A Latin American regional conference was held at the beginning of this year. The following article summarizes its findings and major recommendations.

'An urgent and unquestionable necessity. . .'

A regional conference of human rights activists has recommended the creation of an independent "Latin American Human Rights Commission".

At a four-day meeting in San José, Costa Rica, from 11-14 January, more than 50 human rights campaigners from Latin America and the Caribbean brought together by *AI* said that the establishment of a non-governmental human rights organization for the region was an "urgent and unquestionable necessity".

The commission would need to investigate massive and systematic human rights abuses and be empowered to receive copies of all writs of *habeas corpus* and similar legal documents presented to courts throughout Latin America.

The meeting agreed that international action to protect human rights on the continent had become essential to combat the torture, killing and "disappearance" of political detainees.

For many Latin American countries gross violations of human rights turned the 1970s into one of the blackest decades in their history, with governments resorting to abduction and murder to crush opposition.

During the decade respect for human rights was further eroded as states violated personal liberty, detained and tortured political suspects, curtailed trade union rights and the right to freedom of association, restricted or banned political parties and dissolved parliaments.

To find practical methods to combat these abuses, *AI*'s San José conference brought together members of human rights groups, lawyers, trade unionists, peasant leaders, medical doctors and other human rights activists from some 20 nations.

The delegates agreed that a "human rights consciousness" needed to be awakened in the region. They suggested that international organizations should take the initiative in stimulating awareness of human rights violations and the mechanisms that can prevent them. In Latin America, special emphasis would need to be placed on cases of torture, execution and "disappearance" of political prisoners.

One of the conference's working groups dealt with questions of law. It recommended that a professional code of ethics be established for lawyers, setting down the basic principles that should be respected by the legal profession—including the obligation to act in defence of human rights.

The working group pointed out that lawyers who fulfilled the obligations of the code would need, in many cases, to be guaranteed protection.

A second working group dealt with the role of social and occupational groups in the defence of human rights. In the case of Latin America, the role of the Roman Catholic Church was highlighted.

The working group recommended that the Vatican's attention should be drawn to the role played by military and prison chaplains. The Vatican, it was said, should issue clear instructions to all bishops and chaplains on the question of the torture of prisoners and the training of military personnel in torture techniques.

In addition to the Vatican, the World Council of Churches and the Orthodox Churches should be contacted to request that they establish a permanent campaign for the promotion of human rights through parishes, religious communities, schools and churches.

Trade union organizations would be assisted in their educational efforts, it was pointed out, if *AI* could provide information on human rights to them in a systematic fashion. The trade unions in turn would provide regular,

up-to-date information on the violations of human rights in each country in the region.

AI was urged to concern itself not only with violations of human rights of organized urban workers, about which information is readily available, but also to investigate the plight of rural workers and unorganized urban workers, whose situation, it was said, was more perilous.

The conference's third working group concentrated on the medical aspects of torture. It stressed the importance of medically examining and documenting all cases of torture. It recommended that such medical reports should be sent to bodies such as the World Medical Association, International Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations and Amnesty International.

The working group also emphasized the need for facilitating access by doctors to torture victims so that such examinations could take place safely and independently.

A recurring problem in Latin America, as in other regions, has been

'The letters kept coming and coming. . .'

One of those who attended the Costa Rica seminar was Julio de Peña Valdez, the former Secretary General of the National Workers Confederation of the Dominican Republic. In 1971 he was accused of conspiring against the security of the state and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. After investigating the case Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience and he was released in 1974.

He was again arrested in 1975 in the course of mass arrests throughout the Dominican Republic. *AI* members around the world sent him Christmas cards in December that year and the following January he was released by order of President Joaquín Balaguer.

At the Costa Rica seminar, Señor Peña recalled the effect of the hundreds of letters and cards he received in prison:

"I was being kept naked in an underground cell. When the first two hundred letters came the guards gave me back my clothes. Then the next two hundred letters came and the prison director came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters kept coming and coming: three thousand of them. The President was informed. The letters still kept arriving and the President called the prison and told them to let me go.

After I was released the President called me to his office for a man to man talk. He said: 'How is it that a trade union leader like you has so many friends all over the world?' He showed me an enormous box full of all the letters he had received and, when we parted, he gave them to me. I still have them."

Postscript: In 1979 *AI's* Regional Liaison Officer for Latin America met Sr. Peña in the Dominican Republic and showed him the case sheet prepared by *AI's* Research Department after his first arrest. After a careful reading of the case sheet Sr. Peña said it contained not a single error, which surprised him since he failed to understand how *AI* had succeeded in compiling so much information about him. Among those working for his release was a former refugee from Nazi aggression, Hannah Grunwald, now living in New York. She regularly phoned President Balaguer to protest against the treatment of Sr. Peña, who now calls her "mi mamá gringa" (my Yankee mother) □

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the participation of medical personnel in torture, contrary to the ethics of the profession. To counteract this it was suggested that efforts should be made to press medical schools to stress the importance of medical ethics and censure abuses of those ethics.

AI will now be considering how best it can implement the recommendations of the conference and use the advice of the participants to refine its techniques for more effective intervention in cases of "disappearance" and torture.

The conference surveyed a range of human rights violations in Latin America, among them the violation of the right to life, the right to physical integrity and the right to legal protection.

Most Latin American countries abolished the death penalty at the turn of the century. In those countries where death sentences are still passed, they are rarely carried out. There were two executions in Guatemala between 1956 and 1972 and eight in Peru between 1973 and 1979. In Cuba, where there were numerous executions in the 1960s, only three or four executions are known to have taken place in the last few

years, all of them for common crimes.

But the executions are not only carried out by judicial process. Paramilitary groups, whose existence is tolerated or supported by governments, have carried out detentions, abductions and murders in countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Opposition groups have also carried out numerous political abductions and assassinations throughout the continent.

"Disappearances" have also emerged as a form of silencing real or suspected political opponents. Security forces or paramilitary groups take prisoners whose detention is not recognized by the government. The victims can be held secretly for days, months or years. Urgent action is required as soon as a "disappearance" is reported to ensure that the "disappearance" does not become permanent.

The torture of prisoners during interrogation has been institutionalized throughout Latin America. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of men and women have died under torture or have been mutilated before being put to death in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Routine methods of torture include the administration of electric shock and powerful drugs, sleep deprivation, beatings and immersion in water.

Rarely have judicial or state authorities investigated the consistent allegations of torture. In the majority of cases, "confessions" obtained under torture have been treated as admissible evidence in political trials. When torturers have been identified, military jurisdictions and the need to protect the security forces have been used to prevent prosecutions.

Each year thousands of writs of *habeas corpus* are presented to the courts and rejected. In many of those cases, quick action by appeal courts could have saved prisoners' lives.

Political trials have been transferred in many countries from the jurisdiction of civil courts to military tribunals as a result of emergency decrees enacted in the name of national security. In other countries, political detainees can simply be held without charge or trial "at the disposition of the executive power". The majority of those now held in Latin America in this way have been kept in detention more than three years □

Nigeria Government reduces death penalties

The civilian government of President Shehu SHAGARI that took office on 1 October 1979 has abolished military Special Tribunals and suspended many death sentences handed down by the tribunals.

Under the previous military government Nigerian citizens convicted by the Special Tribunals of offences such as armed robbery and counterfeiting faced mandatory death sentences. No appeals were permitted. By May 1979 at least 500 people convicted of armed

robbery had been executed by firing squad, following enactment of the 1970 Robbery and Firearms Decree. Large numbers were held on death row, awaiting execution.

In late January the government announced that no prisoners sentenced to death for armed robbery by military Special Tribunals whose sentences had not been confirmed before 30 September 1979 would be executed. They are to have a new trial before a federal High Court □

Turkey Teachers and metal workers held

Members of the Turkish Teachers Association, TOB-DER, have been arrested for allegedly violating Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code, which have been used repeatedly to imprison left-wing activists in the country. The two articles prohibit forming organizations "aimed at establishing the domination of one social class over other social classes" and "making propaganda for the domination of one social class over other social classes".

Also charged under Article 142 is the President of the Turkish Metal Workers Trade Union, Kemal TURKLER and six of his colleagues who were arrested for singing the

socialist anthem, *The Internationale*, at a union meeting.

AI has requested further information from the Turkish authorities about the cases but has so far received no reply. In a letter to Prime Minister Suleyman DEMIREL on 1 February, *AI* Secretary General Martin ENNALS wrote: "We do, of course, understand the difficulties with which any Turkish government has been confronted in recent years because of the violence from both left-and right-wing factions in Turkey, but we urge you to consider that the arrest of those engaged in non-violent trade union activities and meetings will only serve to exacerbate the situation rather than to alleviate it." □

Syria Lawyers press human rights demand

The Damascus Bar Association has called for an end to Syria's 17-year-old State of Emergency and the release of all people detained without a court order.

The association has also demanded that all detainees be held in official centres under civilian control and that state security courts be abolished. At a general meeting on 14 January the association's members decided to boycott the security courts indefinitely.

To press their demands the lawyers drew up plans for a one-day strike on 31 January, but the action is reported to have been called off following a

meeting between the head of the Bar Association and the Syrian Prime Minister and Minister of Justice.

On 30 January *AI* issued a statement calling on the Syrian Government to give public assurances that it would take immediate steps to release all prisoners of conscience, review the cases of all citizens detained without charge or trial and halt the practice of torture.

AI has received no such assurances since it published a briefing paper in October 1979 detailing human rights abuses in Syria (November 1979 *Newsletter*) □

Madagascar New cases studied

The cases of seven prisoners in Madagascar are now being investigated by *AI* to determine if they are prisoners of conscience. Charges against them include unspecified security offences and all have been publicly accused of involvement in "imperialist plots to destabilize the revolution".

Five of the prisoners are believed to have been held without trial beyond the country's legal limit of 18 months.

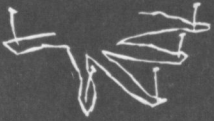
The prisoners are: three former high-ranking police and military officers detained in October 1977, Richard ANDRIAMAHOLISON, Marson RAKOTONIRINA and Jean ABEL-RAKOTO; two refugees from Eastern Europe, Kristo MILANOVIC and Dimitri VALEV, arrested separately in October 1977 for illegal entry; Henri BOITARD, a member of the Madagascar Bar, arrested in May 1979 and charged with complicity in the escape of a South African prisoner convicted of espionage (whom he defended in 1977); and a journalist, RAKOTOMALA, detained in August 1979.

AI is concerned about their prolonged pre-trial detention and believes that political motives may underly their arrest. These are the first cases to be taken up by *AI* since President Didier RATSIRAKA released all political prisoners in 1975 to mark the inauguration of a new constitution. The government has not responded to *AI*'s requests for details □

Changes of Address

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Norway

Amnesty International
Nigerian Section
7 Onayade Street
Fadewi-Yaba
Lagos
Nigeria



amnesty international

campaign for the abolition of torture

appeals

Amnesty International opposes the torture of prisoners in all cases, wherever and whenever it is practised. Any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is a violation of the international human rights standards unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. International appeals can help to alleviate the plight of prisoners being subjected to cruel treatment. Your letters should follow carefully the instructions given below.

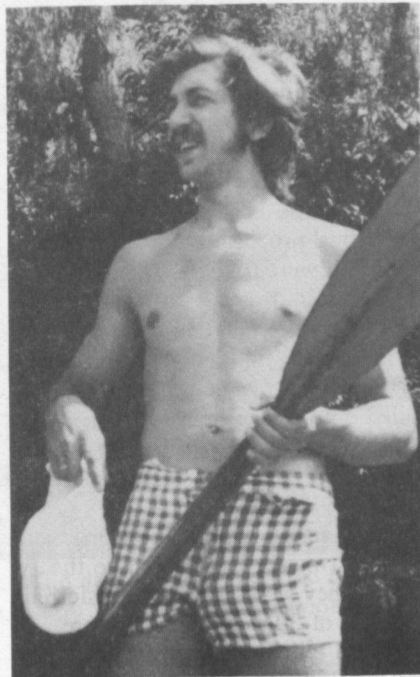
Argentinian Gov't refuses to acknowledge arrests

Four young people kidnapped by security forces in Argentina in August 1979 may still be alive in secret prisons, although the authorities have never acknowledged their detention. They were among an estimated total of about 30 people believed by AI to have been abducted in August. Some of these people have been released and the detention of others has been officially acknowledged.

An eyewitness report by two survivors of Argentina's secret camps, published by AI in February, describes systematic torture of victims snatched from streets and homes (see page 1). The survivors believe most of the people they met in the camps were finally killed. AI has reason to believe, however, that the four people named below may still have been alive several months after their abduction.

José Luis HASSAN, 24, and his wife Josefina VILLAFLORE DE HASSAN, 28, were taken from their home in Villa Domenica on 3 August by armed men who used six white cars. Their two-year-old daughter was also kidnapped but was later sent to her grandparents. Señor Hassan, who worked in a clothing factory, is reported to have been a member of a radical trade union but not to have been politically active for five years.

Two days later, Pablo Armando LEPISCOPO, a 24-year-old medical student who also worked as a taxi driver, was abducted by armed men in three cars while driving home from his parents' house in Buenos Aires. Seized with him was 21-year-old German national Betina EHRENHAUS.



Pablo Armando Lepiscopo

She was released after two days. Writs of *habeas corpus* were presented, but nothing has been learned of Pablo Lepiscopo's whereabouts.

Fernando BRODSKY, a primary school teacher and psychology student, was abducted from his home in Villa Martelli, Buenos Aires Province, on 14 August.

Please write courteously worded letters urging that the fate of these four people be immediately clarified and that their physical safety be guaranteed. Write to: Exmo. Sr. Presidente, General (RE) Jorge Rafael Videla, Casa Rosada, Balcarce 50, Buenos Aires C.F., Argentina.

Soviet court sends Baptist to mental hospital

A 42-year-old Russian Baptist has been forcibly confined to a psychiatric hospital after attempting to distribute leaflets on religious themes, according to reports reaching AI.

Anatoly RUNOV, a shoemaker and member of the dissenting wing of the Baptist Church which is not officially registered or recognized by the state authorities, is reported to have been charged with "hooliganism". He appeared before a court in Balakhna, in the Gorky region, on 5 December 1979. The court accepted the results of a psychiatric examination which is said to have diagnosed Mr Runov as schizophrenic. It is reported to have ordered him confined for an indefinite period to a special psychiatric hospital, the severest form of psychiatric detention in the Soviet Union.

Mr Runov has been forcibly interned in psychiatric hospitals for short periods three times before because of his religious beliefs. In February 1979 he voluntarily underwent examination by Dr Alexander Voloshanovich, a psychiatrist who acts as a consultant for the unofficial Moscow-based Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes. Dr Voloshanovich concluded that Mr Runov was fully accountable for his actions. AI possesses a copy of Dr Voloshanovich's detailed report.

AI continued to receive reports throughout 1979 of ill-treatment of prisoners of conscience in psychiatric hospitals, including the administering of drugs to them without medical justification.

Please write courteously worded letters to R.A. Rudenko, the USSR Procurator General, urging the immediate release of Anatoly Runov and expressing concern that he is apparently being confined for political rather than medical reasons. Write to: SSSR, g. Moskva, Pushkinskaya ul. 15a, Prokuratura SSSR, Generalnomu Prokuroru, R.A. Rudenko.

United Nations Congress to debate abolition of the death penalty

For the first time in its history the United Nations has included the question of the death penalty on the agenda of a major international conference. The topic is to be taken up by the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, a five-yearly meeting that helps to formulate international penal standards.

If the Congress takes a strong stand against the death penalty, its impact could be as significant as the previous meeting in 1975 that approved a draft anti-torture declaration, subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly.

AI is now preparing proposals for the Congress aimed at abolishing the death penalty and strengthening action against the torture and cruel treatment of prisoners.

As part of the lead-up to the Congress *AI* has launched an appeal for the worldwide abolition of the

death penalty (February *Newsletter*), calling on the UN to move from cautious statements about the "desirability" of abolition to an unqualified position in favour of abolition.

Before the Congress meets, *AI* national sections will be contacting

their government's delegates and other organizations to bring home *AI*'s message of total and uncompromising opposition to the death penalty.

At the Congress itself, due to be held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 25 August to 5 September, *AI* is planning to hold a seminar for delegates to inform them about *AI*'s position on the need for swift action against the death penalty.

Although the Congress is not an international legislative body, it can recommend measures to the UN and its agencies, and those recommendations are entitled to be adopted. The First Congress (Geneva, Switzerland, 1955) recommended the adoption of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners by the UN as a guideline for all member states and for incorporation into national laws. The Fourth Congress (Kyoto, Japan, 1970), where Secretary General Martin ENNALS represented *AI* for the first time, brought the rules once again to the attention of government officials responsible for enforcing the rules in their own countries.

The draft Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was acclaimed as the major achievement of the Fifth Congress in 1975, comparable in significance to the Standard Minimum Rules elaborated by the First Congress in 1955.

AI had submitted detailed proposals to the 1975 Congress on torture, on codes of ethics for police, lawyers and medical personnel, and on ways of strengthening the rules. The *AI* delegation led by the Secretary General held two seminars parallel to the Congress to highlight its concerns □

Argentinian terror

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"operating theatres", as the torture rooms were called. It had three, each furnished with a *picana* (electric cattle prod) and metal table, to which prisoners were bound naked.

The treatment, they say, was essentially the same for all prisoners: "For the first hour, they would apply the *picana* to us, without asking any questions. The purpose of this was, as they put it, 'to soften you up, and so that we'll understand one another.'"

According to the two men, torture could go on for hours, day after day: "Between sessions of the *picana*, they would use the *submarino* (holding our heads under water), hang us up by our feet, hit us on the sexual organs, beat us with chains, put salt on our wounds and use any other method that occurred to them. . . They would also apply 220-volt direct current to us. . . Everything was done under the supervision of a doctor, who checked our blood pressure and reflexes: 'We've got all the time in the world, and this will go on indefinitely.'"

Some of the victims described by González and de la Paz had been politically active, others were only related to political suspects, and there was no apparent reason for the abduction of some. Others were taken for the purpose of extortion.

The army, navy, air force and federal police all had men in the "task forces" which did the kidnapping and operated in the camps. Generals, colonels and other high-ranking officers were among those whom González and de la Paz say they saw at the camps. The "task forces" had to get authority

from higher up to carry out abductions.

When a kidnapping was approved, police and other security services would reportedly "surrender" an area of several city blocks to let the abduction squad operate.

Victims' property was plundered: title deeds were forged so that homes could be sold, prisoners were forced to sign bills of sale for their cars, savings accounts were emptied. Furniture and anything else of value was looted, loaded onto lorries kept for that purpose. The authorized plunder was apparently a major incentive for the "task force" officers.

The ultimate fate for most prisoners was the "transfer", according to the report. They were usually "transferred" in groups of 30 to 50. Guards were overheard telling such a group that they would be given injections of a tranquilizer because they faced a long and difficult journey. Shackled and blindfolded, they were loaded into lorries and never seen again.

A prisoner who had served as a doctor in the camps told González and de la Paz that he had discovered that some "transferred" prisoners were given injections of a powerful sedative, then taken by lorry and loaded into an aircraft, "from which they were thrown into the sea, alive but unconscious".

In response to questions about this at the news conference, an *AI* representative pointed out that, particularly at seasons when Atlantic currents changed, corpses bearing the marks of torture were sometimes washed ashore on the Argentine coast □

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England. Printed in Great Britain by Hill and Garwood Ltd., Fourth Way, Wembley, Middlesex. Available on subscription at £6 (US \$15) per calendar year.